



“Going Deeper to Go Further”:
Outward Engagement from the Benedictine Tradition
Rev. Bill Haley

*“Unless the waters of the spring are living and flow outward, Merton said, the spring only becomes a stagnant pool. And if the spring loses contact with the spring which is its source, it dries up. In this image of Merton’s, **contemplation** is the spring of living water, and **action** is the stream that flows out from it to others; it is the same water.”*

Thelma Hall



The Spring... Prayer

“The goal, however, is not the reading, nor the Hours, nor the meditation, nor some mythical romantic monastic ideal.

God is the goal.”

Mark Plaiss

“We are not social workers.

We may be doing social work in the eyes of some people, but
we must be contemplatives in the heart of the world...

Our primary vocation is not to love the poor.

Our vocation is to belong to Jesus.”

Mother Teresa



The Stream... Action

The outward orientation, impact, and active life that flows from the Benedictine tradition:

1. Hospitality (chapter 53 of the Rule)

53.1 All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matt 25:35)

2. The formation of others

3. Prayer

4. Education

5. Living witness to an alternative reality—The Kingdom of God

"In the midst of society, as people struggled to get by in the world, Benedictine communities were to be islands where people could learn a different way of doing life." JW Hartgrove

"Prayer and action, therefore, can never be seen as contradictory or mutually exclusive. Prayer without action grows in a powerless pietism, and action without prayer degenerates into questionable manipulation. If prayer leads us into a deeper unity with the compassionate Christ, it will always give rise to concrete acts of service."

Henri Nouwen

"In times of crisis, go deeper..." Gordon Cosby



The Rule of St. Benedict and the Benedictine Tradition invite us to...

- 1. Go deeper into God through prayer**
- 2. Go deeper into the implications of the image of God in everyone**
- 3. Go deeper into hospitality**, to create spaces for people to meet God

"...Still—that is our vocation: to convert the hostis into a hospes, the enemy into a guest, and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced."

Henri Nouwen

- 4. Go deeper into a life ordered for God—go deeper into the Rule**

"The monk is in the monastery. The monk is also on Wall Street, on Main Street and down on the farm....The Holy Spirit is expanding the horizon of what it means to be a monk in order to bring all closer to the ultimate reality—Jesus the Christ." Mark Plaiss

Going deeper into God is required to go further in God's mission in the world, and the Benedictine Tradition gives us some key ways to do that...



Recommended Books

Commentaries on the Rule of St. Benedict itself

The Rule of St. Benedict 1980—The Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN

***A Life-Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* — Esther de Waal

The Wisdom of Benedict — Rt. Rev. Justin DuVall, OSB

Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition — Columba Stewart, OSB

Monastic Practices — Charles Cummings, OCSO

On New Monasticism and Lay Monasticism

***Spirituality for Everyday Living: An Adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict*—Brian Taylor

***The Inner Room: A Journey into Lay Monasticism* — Mark Plaiss

***New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today's Church* —Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

School(s) for Conversion: 12 marks of a New Monasticism — The Rutba House, ed.

The Universal Monk: The Way of the New Monastics — John Michael Talbot

The New Friars: The Emerging Movement Serving the World's Poor — Scott A. Bessenecker

On Hospitality

The Paraclete Book of Hospitality — Paraclete Press, ed.

Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition — Christine D. Pohl